

FLICC newsletter

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FLICC Joins the National Book Festival

The second annual National Book Festival on October 12, 2002, was the occasion for three *firsts*:

- Co-hosts First Lady Laura Bush and Librarian of Congress James Billington were accompanied by the Russian Federation's first lady, Ludmila Putin;
- The event occurred on the Capitol's West Lawn under tents;
- And, most importantly for federal librarians, FLICC sponsored an exhibit as part of the Library of Congress Pavilion tent.

Initiated by a request regarding the event from Executive Director Susan M. Tarr to FLICC members, Sharon Lenius (National Guard and the Special Libraries Association's Military Librarians Division) and Jewel Player Library of Congress and the American Library Association's Federal and Armed Forces Librarians Round Table, with Mike Conklin, on detail to FEDLINK Network Operations from the Department of the Treasury, formed a planning committee. Their charge was to create an exhibit highlighting federal library and information center services to the public. As a result of the planning committee's diligence, 14 federal libraries and information centers represented by 19 federal librarians pulled together posters, bookmarks, pamphlets, and Web site links to highlight how federal libraries serve the public. On October 18, they arrived in shifts to serve at the exhibit and work directly with festival visitors.

The event was a wonderful opportunity for federal librarians to "share their wares" with not only the public but also colleagues. Two exhibit tables, each with a flat screen monitor with a wireless connection to the Web, were overflowing with information and assistance. Each hour, at least four librarians were engaging bookfest visitors and helping them onsite with reference questions.

The book festival was also a time to highlight the Library of Congress' FLICC/FEDLINK program (volunteers



Susan M. Tarr (left) joins Anne Marie Frketich (Armed Forces Medical Library) and Marcia Zorn (NLM).

wore "Ask Me About Federal Libraries" name tags and festival tee shirts.)

Exhibitors were even able to distribute information about employment from the FLICC Personnel Working Group to prospective federal librarians.

pg. 4, col. 1

inside:

See page 2

Board Talk

See page 3

FAIR Act Resources

See page 6

Performance Measures

Update



BOARD TALK

How many of you have been consulted about library designations in conjunction with your agency's FAIR Act inventory—the activity which establishes whether federal government functions are designated “commercial” or “inherently governmental”? Don't know about the FAIR Act? Well, if you're in the Executive Branch, you may want to find out about it. (To learn more, go to the OMB Web page at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/fair-index.html>.)

At the May and July FLICC Executive Board meetings, at the May 2002 FLICC membership meeting and in discussions via the closed listserv for FLICC members, committee and board members shared experiences (including “no experience”) with agency processes to meet the June 30, 2002, deadline for the fourth round of annual inventories under the Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act. The process involved identifying all agency functions that were not inherently governmental (i.e., “commercial activities”) and fitting them into pre-established functional codes (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/functioncodes.pdf>). A few libraries reported that all functions had been designated inherently governmental, but many proposed that at least some library functions be so designated. The 1992 policy letter on which the designation is based asserts that “agencies may determine that aspects of their library operations... involve performance of an inherently government function.” (See item #4 under Supplementary Information at <http://www.arnet.gov/Library/OFPP/PolicyLetters/Letters/PL92-1.html>)

The codes available for library functions are G102–G105 (the “G” series are Social Services!) and Y850–Microfilming and Library Services (under “Y” for Force Management and General Support). Some libraries attempted to suggest special codes under the “R” series (Research, Development, Test and Evaluation) but, as of last report, were unsuccessful. The OMB instruction does state: “Agencies must use the listed OMB Function Codes in their June 2002 submission, unless a deviation is approved, in advance, by OMB.” (See instruction #2 in OMB's February 27, 2002 memo at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/m02-04.pdf>.)

In 2002, OMB required agencies to report and code all inherently governmental functions, as well as those

functions considered commercial. The law requires Executive Branch agencies to publish the inventories of commercial activities annually for review by the public (including potential private sector contractors); OMB may also publish the list of inherently governmental functions, but that is not legally mandated.

Why should federal libraries and information centers care about this process? Because it is this inventory that determines which federal functions are eligible for outsourcing to a commercial vendor. (Note: Only federally staffed functions are inventoried; contracted functions are not part of this exercise.) For FY2002, the Bush Administration asked agencies to seek commercial alternatives for at least 5 percent of all the functions designated as commercial in the current inventory. For FY2003, the target is another 10 percent. Thus, the FAIR Act inventory determines whether your information functions are part of the base being targeted for commercialization either this year or next.

So, if you feel that you have already privatized those aspects of your operations that are most efficiently and effectively carried out by contract workers, you need to be part of the process that decides whether the remainder of your library operations should be subject to competitive sourcing. You might think it's too late to do anything, but it may be the right time to start preparing for NEXT year's inventory by learning what your agency reported to OMB about your functions in last year's cycle.

The FLICC Newsletter is launching a series on this issue, beginning with the article and resources mentioned on page 3. If you have an initiative for FLICC to take on to make this process fairer or more beneficial to federal libraries and information centers, we're open to suggestions!

If you have experiences to share that may be instructive to others, send them to me at suta@loc.gov (let me know if you want your agency's identity kept confidential), or share them directly with the broader federal library community on the fedlib listserv (fedlib@loc.gov).

Susan M. Tarr
Executive Director, FLICC



FLICC Helps Federal Libraries Respond to the FAIR Act

In a series of meetings, presentations, listserv discussions, cybercasts, surveys, and one-on-one conversations, FLICC members began to galvanize around issues related to commercial activities, outsourcing and definitions of what is "inherently governmental."

These efforts were in response to The Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act (FAIR), P.L. 105-270, which "directs Federal agencies to issue each year an

presentations are still available online on the FLICC/FEDLINK Web site at <http://www.loc.gov/flicc/video/fall02mem/fallmembership02.html>.

Informal Surveys and Case Studies Identify Needs

Now that the Bush Administration's annual goal for percentage of commercial activities competitively sourced by each agency has increased, FLICC queried

The Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act (FAIR), P.L. 105-270, "directs Federal agencies to issue each year an inventory of all commercial activities performed by Federal employees, e.g., those activities that are not inherently governmental."

inventory of all commercial activities performed by Federal employees, e.g., those activities that are not inherently governmental." The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has the responsibility to review and consult with an agency regarding its commercial activities inventory. When it is completed, each agency sends its inventory both to Congress and the public. With completion of the inventory, including the challenge and appeals process, the FAIR Act then requires agencies to review activities on the inventory.

OMB Circular A-76, "Performance of Commercial Activities," its supplemental handbook, and OMB Circular A-76 Transmittal Memorandums 20 and 22 offer federal library managers details on complying with the annual requirements of the law. (For the latest information and for a number of resources on the FAIR Act from OMB, visit their Web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/fair-index.html> or visit FLICC's *Handbook of Federal Librarianship*, Chapter 5 at <http://www.loc.gov/flicc/hbfl/chap5.html>.)

FAIR Act Centerpiece of 2002 Meetings

The FEDLINK Fall Membership Meeting featured three speakers with intimate knowledge of the FAIR Act: Suzanne Grefsheim, chief of the NIH Library, Susan M. Tarr, executive director of FLICC, and Barbara Wrinkle, director of Air Force Libraries and Information Systems. After Tarr gave a thorough introduction, both Grefsheim and Wrinkle gave detailed presentations of their libraries' experience with the commercial activities inventory and other requirements.

The entire meeting was cybercast and these video

presentations are still available online on the FLICC/FEDLINK Web site at <http://www.loc.gov/flicc/video/fall02mem/fallmembership02.html>.

its members regarding their participation in and response to the inventory within their agencies. "We learned that many agencies don't consult their libraries to categorize library functions. We also learned that libraries that attempted to create more fitting categories for their functions than those provided by OMB were, apparently, unsuccessful," said Tarr.

FLICC Sets Its Agenda for 2003

FLICC is still pondering if there is appropriate action to be taken by the committee on behalf of federal libraries and information centers—e.g., should FLICC suggest additional function categories to OMB for the 2003 FAIR Act inventory? What communications or information resources would help federal librarians take a more informed part in their agency decision making regarding competitive sourcing? Should more effort be made to identify certain library or information functions as "inherently governmental" by all agencies? Should FLICC try to collect more information about performance of contract libraries and the impact of competitive sourcing on federal information services?

These and other questions will direct the organization and its ongoing efforts. Future articles will highlight experts and updates on initiatives for 2003. If you have additional questions or concerns, please send email inquiries to flicc@loc.gov.

Book Festival, From pg 1, col 2

As expected, all types and ages of folks visited the exhibit, although most were parents, teachers, or individuals interested in personal or small business research. Between 30 to 100 visited per hour asking questions ranging from *"How can the public use federal libraries?"* to *"What Web sites will help my children with their science and biology homework?"* and *"Where do I find information on clinical trials?"* Also heard from some: *"I didn't know there were federal libraries."* All the more reason to continue to market federal library and information center services!

The most popular promotional giveaways were the posters, bookmarks, fortune cookies, candy and plastic bags, including the FLICC Bicentennial bookmark with a list of FLICC member agencies printed on the back to illustrate FLICC's service to all three branches of the government.. The FLICC Bicentennial poster and the Army's "Fast Track" Reading poster were all gone by early afternoon, as were the handy National Criminal Justice Reference Service plastic bags. Carla Pomager of the Army Community and Family Support Center reports that the person featured on the Army poster, Mike Kohn, is the Army bronze-metal-winning Olympic bobsledder, featured in the December 2002 *Washingtonian* magazine on page 66, and listed as one of *People* magazine's most eligible bachelors this past year! Go Army librarians! Anything to draw attention to how libraries support the agency's mission.

One of the more elaborately designed pamphlets, "An Odyssey in Print: Adventures in the Smithsonian Libraries," includes a perforation for a tear-off bookmark listing all Smithsonian libraries.

Steven Greenberg of the National Library of Medicine's (NLM) History of Medicine Division was perhaps the most prepared exhibitor with not only promotional giveaways but also a set of his business cards and a large, mounted NLM poster which he placed near a flat screen monitor of NLM's Websites; he was engaged by lots of health and medicine questions.



Karen Filkil (Army Research Laboratory Library) and Bryan Criswell (National Criminal Justice Reference Center) welcome visitors.



Amy Loughran (Army Community and Family Support Center) is ready for questions.



Carla Pomager (Army Community and Family Support Center), Courtney Shaw (Smithsonian), and Audrey Thomas (Army Corp of Engineers) demonstrate some of the booth's resources.

All of the FLICC volunteers enjoyed the experience of sharing and being engaged by random reactions to the exhibit.

A library of the promotional giveaways has been stored at FEDLINK Network Operations for future sharing. If you'd like a set of the revised FLICC Bicentennial bookmark (along with the recent FEDLINK brochure) for your library and management or a package of the samples to see how your colleagues are promoting their libraries, please call 707-4848 or send email to fliccfno@loc.gov. If there is a demand, digital versions of these promotionals will be posted on the FLICC/FEDLINK Website.

Special appreciation to the following federal library managers for their support: Blane Dessy and Carol Bursik (Justice), Bill Ballweber (National Criminal Justice Reference Center), Maria Pisa and Sally Sinn (National Agricultural Library), and Sheila McGarr (National Library of Education).

Next year, the 3rd National Book Festival will be held on the Mall. Information about this year's festival is on <http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/>, where plans for next year will appear over the summer. Plan on joining us next year to help improve upon the 2002 exhibit! ■

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL PARTICIPANTS

Fourteen federal libraries represented by 19 librarians pulled together posters, bookmarks, pamphlets, and Website links to highlight how federal libraries serve the public in the following categories:

The Military and Military Families

Army Community & Family Support Center—Carla Pomager and Amy Loughran

The Nation's Science, Technology, and Engineering Researchers

Army Corps of Engineers—Nancy Faget and Audrey Thomas

Army Research Lab—Louise LeTendre and Karen Filkil

Defense Technical Information Center—Nancy Wright

The Nation's Educators

National Library of Education—Denise Rosenblatt

Citizens Nationwide (via Federal Depository Libraries and GPO Access)

Government Printing Office—Linda Resler

The Nation's Federal Judges, Attorneys, Law Enforcement Officials

Drug Enforcement Agency—RoseMary Russo

National Criminal Justice Reference Service—Bryan Criswell and Liz Macaluso

Medical Researchers, Healthcare Professionals and Consumers

National Library of Medicine—Stephen Greenberg and Marcia Zorn

Armed Forces Medical Library—Anne Maria Frketich

Agricultural Policymakers, Researchers, and Consumers of Food and Nutrition Information

National Agricultural Library—Stuart Gagnon and Susan McCarthy

The Public and Researchers at the World's Largest Museum

Complex: The Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution Libraries—Mary Augusta Thomas

National Museum of Natural History—Courtney Shaw

Freer Gallery of Art and Sackler Gallery—Kathryn Phillips

Metrics and Performance: Measures for Federal Libraries

At a past FLICC Membership Meeting, Denise Davis, then Director of Statistics and Surveys, National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), spoke to members about the specific statistics most information science professionals agree are important to standardize, especially those related to electronic resource usage.

Aggregators Look to the Desktop

Davis said she began working with aggregators and database vendors to get at what was happening at the desktop information level. By working with the vendors, she found it was easier to tell more about library usage of the resources. For online (fee-based) services, she said there was plenty of detailed information on user invoices which she could use to juxtapose the various data and get useful statistics.

Davis noted that big aggregators really do have a sense of what the customers want and are bringing useful data to the customers, although not as quickly as the field

licensing agreements with publishers and as a result, backfiles are no longer available. "This has upset everyone's expectation of perpetuity," she said.

Another illusion that has complicated the discussion, according to Davis, is the belief that access to information is a right and that information is free (i.e., librarians and patrons were used to having content on the shelf and now they have to pay *each* time they use it). She said libraries need to know about the data they collect to defend expenditures, defend staffing levels (i.e., electronic resources do not relieve the need for staffing because users have to be taught to use them), help with information literacy, and obtain support for continuing education needed because of constant changes in functionality.

Identifying Reliable Measures Is Critical

Davis emphasized that meaningful performance measurement requires accurate and reliable measures of network performance, content use, and value of use. In

"When publishers stopped giving permission to aggregators to deliver content, whole content sections dropped off, especially in the late nineties. This has upset everyone's expectation of perpetuity."

—Denise Davis, formerly the Director of Statistics and Surveys, National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)

had hoped. Part of the delay is reaching uniformity in statistics. She said that new national surveys are asking public, academic and state libraries about spending and resources and whether they are beginning to adopt parallel measures and require consistent reporting. Additionally, the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) and National Information Standards Organization (NISO) have adopted the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) measures. As a result of these efforts, more grassroots level programs are demanding accurate reporting.

Initially, there were grand illusions regarding who had control over the data and different approaches to its collection between database vendors and the full-text publishers. "When publishers stopped giving permission to aggregators to deliver content, whole content sections dropped off, especially in the late nineties," said Davis. She said that aggregators did not want to negotiate

addition to output measures, librarianship ideally should develop metrics and indicators demonstrating outcomes. Davis said the final issue is deciding whether the terms "reliable" and "reasonable" are synonymous.

According to Davis, there are many challenges facing libraries and vendors in this data collection process. The first is local technology infrastructure and who has the ability within the library or agency to do data mining. Understanding this infrastructure has an impact on collecting data. Data miners need to be able to understand and articulate how IP logins work and if the system can even collect login data. The reliability of the data and its articulation begins at this level.

Collecting use statistics locally is another option. Some collection can happen at the desktop level and some at the network level; these data should match with vendor reports. Davis said these reports combined help analysts

understand what is happening in the library.

Then the process of making sense of all the data begins. Davis posed a number of data evaluation questions (Do turnaways count? Do thresholds of use need to be known? Does the library need unlimited access to resources or for just a few users?) She pointed out that caching issues are also important as some pages have a high hit frequency and aggregators may not report that users went to cached pages.

Organizations Tackle Measurement Issues

Davis then reviewed the efforts of several organizations looking into these issues and gave her impressions of their efforts:

ICOLC (<http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/>) is concerned with which measurements are meaningful as they look at all the measures, not just full-text measures. This speaks to a powerful group belief that granular information is more important. ICOLC has also supplied samples of what usage data questions libraries should ask their vendors.

Florida State University has a project called "Developing National Data Collection Models for Library Network Statistics and Performance Measures," which its professors co-founded and worked on with the American Library Association (<http://www.ii.fsu.edu/Projects/IMLS/>). The project has 19 measurements and a variety of methodologies to collect data and put its analysis in practice.

Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) is part of a British group of publishers who have a working group on electronic measures (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>). They have recognized that publishers need to be part of this measurement discussion and want to get a code together on what the basic statistics are for libraries and what statistics are needed for internal publishing management. This group has hired a full-time person to manage this project who will also be sitting on U.S. committees representing British publishers. Davis hopes the results will get back to U.S. publishers so that they may realize that this code of practice is important.

Association of Research Libraries (ARL) developed its eMetrics project a few years ago when their board of directors decided they should come up with new measures strategies (<http://www.arl.org/>). This membership group of 200 libraries decided that part of their five-year plan was to understand more about service quality and network measurements.

They looked at the body of work already done in the U.S. and abroad and hired a team to see what could be applied in academic libraries. The field focus groups identified what they needed and another group then identified and field tested the ICOLC measures. They are working on establishing core measures and how to use them and plan to publish them in a "how to" manual.

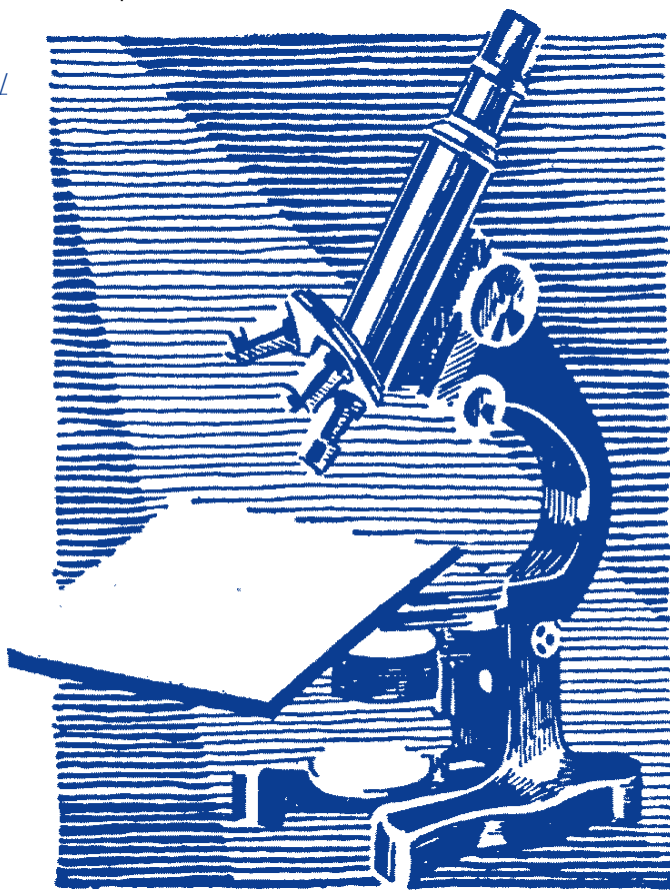
Many of the preliminary reports are available online.

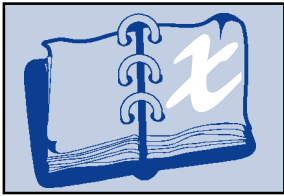
ARL also developed LibQual to define and measure library service quality across institutions and create useful quality-assessment tools for libraries. Davis said they took a business model that looks at the difference between what level of services libraries provide and what users are expecting. After a survey analysis, libraries can review this report to understand what services most need improvement.

Davis Joins NISO Effort

Davis said she is chairing NISO's statistics committee. Every five years, NISO puts its standards up for revision; they asked Davis to participate in this round.

The key difference between the current standards and the revisions are that rather than work from questionnaires and surveys, the new standards will work from what libraries do and how to measure that. The new document will adopt eMetrics into the standards this time. After the basic revision, they will look at best practices and work with NISO to have the standards receive official recognition beyond the normal five year review process. ■





Save the Date!

**FLICC Forum on Federal
Information Policies**

Enterprise Content Management: Responsibility for the 'I' in IT

Wednesday, March 19, 2003 at the Library of Congress

Join information professionals, government officials, industry leaders, and others at the Library of Congress for the 20th Annual FLICC Forum on Federal Information Policies. This year the Forum will address such questions as

- What is the current policy context for federal content management?
- What pending or future policy initiatives could spur the U.S. government to balance the attention and resources it expends on technology with equal effort and funding to manage information content?
- What is the policy framework most likely to achieve these parallel and challenging goals?

**Mark your calendar today and
watch your mail for more information and
details on this important event.**

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